Summary of Criteria and Calculations for Absolute Ratings and Improvement Ratings
(Career/Technology Centers)

These talking points present general information on the calculation of Absolute and Improvement Ratings for career and technology centers. To obtain more technical and specific information on school and district ratings, refer to the Annual Accountability Manual available on the EOC Web site at www.sceoc.org.

❚ South Carolina's education accountability system centers around one fundamental belief: **ALL children can achieve.**

❚ The system uses academic achievement standards to push schools and students toward higher performance and focuses on improving teaching and learning so students are equipped with a strong academic foundation.

❚ Every student is held to the same high standards, and every school and school district is accountable for each of its students.

❚ The system is designed to evaluate annually the progress of each school and school district.

❚ The 2010 goal states, "South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country." The goal is used to establish expectations.

❚ Continuous improvement is the key to meeting South Carolina's 2010 achievement goal. The ratings system is constructed to increase in rigor over time. The target for individual student performance established by the State Board of Education is a score of Proficient. Proficient means the student has met expectations and is well prepared for work at the next grade.

Basic information:

❚ A typical career/technology center is defined as providing high school students credentials and preparation to be successful in the workplace and post-secondary education through career majors and clusters of industry certified programs.

❚ Student achievement tests are not administered by the State of South Carolina to students enrolled in career/technology centers. Ratings are based on current measures of career/technology center student success. The measures, which were developed with career/technology center directors and advice from the School-to-Work Advisory Council, are percentages of students mastering core competencies or certification requirements in center courses, graduation rate, and placement rate.

❚ Since longitudinal student-matched data are unavailable in career/technology centers, the methodology examines improvement of cohorts of students from year to year.

❚ Each career/technology center receives two performance ratings and notification of AYP:

Absolute Rating – based on the level of performance on measures of career technology student success during the school year on which the report card is based. Measures are percentages of students mastering core competencies or certification requirements in center courses and graduation and placement rates.

Improvement Rating – based on the progress of cohorts of students toward attaining and/or maintaining higher levels of performance on measures of student success from year to year. Measures are the same as in the Absolute Rating.

Adequate Yearly Progress – As required by the United States Department of Education through passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation, a notice about the school's status of adequate yearly progress is provided. AYP specifies statewide targets for all students in each student subgroup: racial/ethnic, economic, disability, limited English proficiency, and migrant status. **(Contact the State Department of Education for Information on AYP.)**

❚ Five terms are used in the ratings to describe the level of a center's performance:

Excellent – School performance substantially exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

Good – School performance exceeds the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

Average – School performance meets the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

Below Average – School is in jeopardy of not meeting the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

Unsatisfactory – School performance fails to meet the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal.

What criteria are used to calculate ratings for career/technology centers?

❚ Percentage of career/technology students enrolled in career/technology courses earning a 2.0 or above on the final course grade. This criterion is weighted at twice the value of each of the other criteria.

❚ Number of career/technology 12th graders who graduate in the spring divided by the number of 12th graders enrolled in the center and converted to a percentage.

❚ Number of career/technology completers who are available for placement in either post-secondary instruction, military services or employment divided into the number of students over a three-year period who are actually placed. This criterion mirrors the Perkins standard.

Which students are included in the career/technology center ratings?

❚ All students attending the center at any time during the school year.

How are Absolute Ratings calculated for career/technology centers?

❚ The index is calculated using the following formula:

Step 1 – Match the center's data/performance to the points assigned to each rating criterion in the following table:

Criterion (weighting factor)	Points Assigned				
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Mastery (5)	86% or more (5 x 5 = 25 pts)	78-85% (4 x 5 = 20 pts)	70-77% (3 x 5 = 15 pts)	62-69% (2 x 5 = 10 pts)	61% or below (1 x 5 = 5 pts)
Graduation (2.5)	97% or more (5 x 2.5 = 12.5 pts)	92-96% (4 x 2.5 = 10 pts)	87-91% (3 x 2.5 = 7.5 pts)	82-86% (2 x 2.5 = 5 pts)	81% or below (1 x 2.5 = 2.5 pts)
Placement (2.5)	98% or more (5 x 2.5 = 12.5 pts)	95-97 % (4 x 2.5 = 10 pts)	92-94 % (3 x 2.5 = 7.5 pts)	89-91 % (2 x 2.5 = 5 pts)	88% or below (1 x 2.5 = 2.5 pts)

Step 2 – Determine the weighted points for each criterion. Weighting factors are those in parentheses in the table. Weighted points are calculated by multiplying the assigned points by the weighting factor assigned to each criterion.

Weighting Factors

Mastery	= 5
Graduation	= 2.5
Placement	= 2.5
Total Weight	= 10

Step 3 – Add the points and divide the total by 10 - the total of criteria weighting factors.

❚ The resulting index determines the center's Absolute Rating as follows:

Range of Indices Corresponding to Absolute Rating					
Year	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Average**	**Below Average**	**Unsatisfactory**
2004	3.5 and above	3.1-3.4	2.7-3.0	2.3-2.6	Below 2.3*
2005	3.6 and above	3.2-3.5	2.8-3.1	2.4-2.7	Below 2.4*
2006	3.7 and above	3.3-3.6	2.9-3.2	2.5-2.8	Below 2.5*
2007	3.8 and above	3.4-3.7	3.0-3.3	2.6-2.9	Below 2.6*
2008	3.9 and above	3.5-3.8	3.1-3.4	2.7-3.0	Below 2.7*
2009	4.0 and above	3.6-3.9	3.2-3.5	2.8-3.1	Below 2.8*
2010	4.1 and above	3.7-4.0	3.3-3.6	2.9-3.2	Below 2.9*
2011	4.2 and above	3.8-4.1	3.4-3.7	3.0-3.3	Below 3.0*
2012	4.3 and above	3.9-4.2	3.5-3.8	3.1-3.4	Below 3.1*
2013	4.4 and above	4.0-4.3	3.6-3.9	3.2-3.5	Below 3.2*
2014	4.5 and above	4.1-4.4	3.7-4.0	3.3-3.6	Below 3.3*

*Centers with unsatisfctory ratings will not make AYP.

Here is a sample calculation of an Absolute Rating for a career/technology center:

78% of students exhibiting mastery	=	20.0	points
97% of 12th graders graduating	=	12.5	points
73 % placement rate	= +	2.5	points
Total points	=	35.0	points
Divided by 10		÷ 10.0	(total of weights)
Index	=	3.5	

Absolute Rating: Excellent

Note: This center's index of 3.5 is an Excellent Absolute Rating through the year 2004. From 2005 to 2008, a 3.5 index becomes Good, and from 2009-2012, it becames Average. From 2013-2014, it becomes Below Average.

How are Improvement Ratings calculated for career/technology centers?

❚ The Improvement ratings are calculated using a mathematical formula that results in an index.

❚ The index is calculated by subtracting the center's Absolute Rating index for the prior year from the Absolute Rating index for the year on which the report card is based.

❚ The resulting index determines the Improvement Rating in accordance with the following values:

Rating	Improvement Index
Excellent	0.4 or greater
Good	0.3
Average	0.1-0.2
Below Average	0.0
Unsatisfactory	-0.1 or less

Here is a sample calculation of an Improvement Rating for a career/technology center:

Absolute Rating index for school year for which report card is based: 2.4
Absolute Rating index for the prior school year: - 2.2
                                                                       Difference   0.2
                                                 Improvement Rating: *Average*

Adjustments to the Improvement Rating:

❚ A center's Improvement Rating is adjusted upwards one rating level, for example from Average to Good or from Good to Excellent, if it has experienced exceptional achievement gains among students belonging to demographic groups which have historically underachieved in South Carolina schools (HUGS). This adjustment to the Improvement Rating is intended to recognize and reward centers which are effectively reducing the achievement gap.

  • HUGS are specific groups of students who historically have not achieved as well as the majority student group. HUGS include African-American students, Hispanic students, Native American students, students participating in the free or reduced price federal lunch program and students with non-speech disabilities.

  • The gain for the identified groups must be at least one standard deviation higher than the achievement gain for all students statewide. If a center accomplishes this achievement, a notice is printed on the front page of its report card immediately below the Improvement Rating.

❚ Improvement Ratings for centers sustaining high achievement are established as follows:

  • Centers maintaining an Excellent Absolute Rating for two consecutive years receive a Good Improvement Rating, and if the center's Improvement Rating index for all students is a positive number (e.g., greater than zero), the center's Improvement Rating will be elevated to Excellent.

  • Centers achieving an Absolute Rating index of 4.8 or higher for two consecutive years will be awarded an Excellent Improvement Rating.

48.